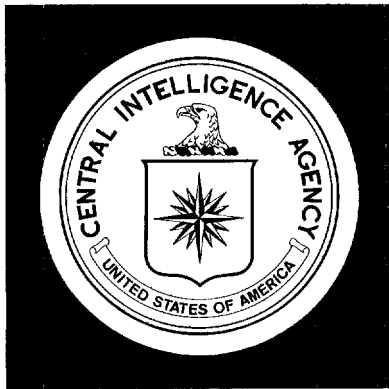


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SAUDI ARABIA - FRANCE: French Foreign Minister Jobert did not conclude any specific agreements during his visit to Saudi Arabia, French and Saudi officials told the US Embassy in Jidda. According to these sources, the talks were confined to generalities. A member of the French delegation described the atmosphere of the talks as "somewhat cool."

At a press conference on January 26, Jobert said his visit was aimed at laying a foundation for long-term cooperation for economic development and denied that the purpose was to conclude an oil deal, although he added that oil and other agreements would come later. He referred to the possibility of re-turning to Saudi Arabia within six months accompanied by other officials and businessmen.

In toasting Jobert at a formal dinner on January 24, Saudi Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Omar Saqqaf made the point that any improvement in the already good relations between France and Saudi Arabia would not be made at the expense of Saudi Arabia's traditional friendships. Saqqaf's cautionary remarks have not yet been reported in the Saudi or the French media.

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EGYPT: The amnesty granted six Egyptian political prisoners last weekend has been attributed by the Egyptian press to their poor health, but President Sadat can gain political mileage from the move by pointing to it as a sign of liberalization in his regime.

Five of the six are Nasir-era prisoners. Mustafa Amin, a popular and still respected journalist, was arrested in 1965 on charges of espionage. Two others were imprisoned in late 1967 for participation in a coup attempt against Nasir. Two other prisoners were senior air force officers sentenced in 1968 for responsibility for Egypt's defeat in June 1967. Only Muhammad Fawzi, war minister until his arrest in May 1971, was imprisoned by the Sadat regime. Fawzi was allied with a group of powerful politicians, including then vice-president Ali Sabri. The politicians, whom Sadat viewed as rivals, were jailed on charges of participating in a "conspiracy" against him.

All of the men have health problems. Most of the others arrested with them remain in prison, including Ali Sabri and the more powerful of those implicated with Fawzi in the conspiracy of May 1971.

The amnesty will be viewed with favor by many Egyptians. Mustafa Amin still has a following in press circles and the military should look with favor on the release of the two officers who were scapegoats for the defeat in 1967.

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INDONESIA: President Suharto yesterday, as part of a broader government shake-up, announced the dismissal of General Sumitro as head of the national security command. In an apparent effort to balance this action politically, Suharto also abolished the post of personal aide to the president, a position that has been held by General Ali Murtopo, Sumitro's principal rival.

Rather than abolish the national security command as planned, Suharto has now decided instead to assume Sumitro's place. Sumitro had used the security organization to influence the course of many non-security aspects of national policy, and his ouster is an obvious move to circumscribe his political strength.

Sumitro retains his post as deputy commander in chief of the armed forces, and therefore remains an important figure. On balance, it appears that Sumitro has lost more power than Murtopo, who may well keep his role as a close adviser of Suharto without the formal title.

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BOLIVIA: President Banzer claimed last night that his nation is threatened by an international subversive plot and imposed a modified form of martial law.

Farmworkers are blockading roads near the agricultural center of Cochabamba, disrupting the flow of produce to food-short urban markets and mining areas. An earlier rash of strikes by urban workers protesting price increases has tapered off.

Troop reinforcements have been sent to Cochabamba, but the government apparently does not plan immediately to use force to open the roads. The regime reportedly is convinced that disgruntled military officers and exiled political dissidents bent on overthrowing Banzer are behind peasant protests. It has begun arresting those allegedly involved in the plot.

FOR THE RECORD*

China - South Vietnam: Peking announced today that it will release "in batches" 48 South Vietnamese and the one American captured during the recent fighting in the Paracel Islands. An initial group consisting of Gerald Kosh, whom the Chinese say is suffering from hepatitis, and five wounded South Vietnamese will be turned over to Red Cross officials at the Hong Kong border on January 31. South Vietnam claims "at least 67" men missing. [REDACTED]

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Warsaw Pact - Romania: The Bulgarian news agency announced yesterday that the Warsaw Pact defense ministers committee will meet in Bucharest in early February. The last such meeting was held in Warsaw in February 1973. On the basis of alphabetic rotation, it is Romania's turn to play host. Soviet Marshal I. I. Yakubovsky, commander in chief of the Pact's joint forces, was in Bucharest last week to make arrangements for the conference. [REDACTED]

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**These items were prepared by CIA without consultation with the Departments of State and Defense.*

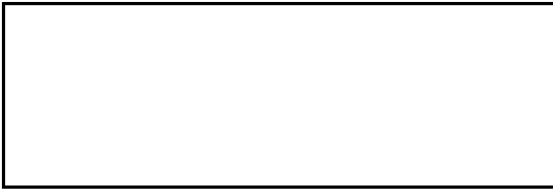
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